

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5260

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 31218

LIMDIS

E.9. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH

SUBJECT: PRC DIPLOMATS POSITION ON CURRENT ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN

1. EMBASSY OFFICER LUNCHEDED WITH PRC PRESS COUNSELOR TS'AO KUEI-SHENG AND HIS COLLEAGUE (WHO SERVES AS ENGLISH INTERPRETER FOR PRC AMBASSADOR) LIN CHUNG-FEI ON DECEMBER 5. TS'AO SPOKE FIRST OF HIS THREE MONTH TRIP TO CHINA FROM WHICH HE HAD RECENTLY RETURNED. HE THEN ASKED ABOUT EVOLUTION OF US/France AND US/EC RELATIONS SINCE HIS DEPARTURE, PARTICULARLY FOLLOWING NEAR EAST CRISIS.

2. AFTER GENERAL DISCUSSION, EMBOFF ASKED TS'AO'S OPINION OF DECEMBER 4 ARTICLES IN FRENCH PRESS BASED ON AFP STORY FROM PEKING CONCERNING ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN IN PRC. (ARTICLES CITED SELF-CRITICISM IN KUANG MING JIH AO BY PROF. FENG YU-LAN.) TS'AO SAID IMMEDIATELY THAT ONE SHOULD NOT PAY TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO WHAT JOURNALISTS WROTE ABOUT CHINA. MOST DID NOT KNOW THE LANGUAGE AND THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, AND HENCE COULD NOT MAKE VALID JUDGEMENTS, POSITION THAT CONFUCIUS WAS A REACTIONARY FIGURE WHO HAD NOT ADVANCED CHINESE HISTORY WAS STANDARD POSITION FOR MANY YEARS AND
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HAD FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN HISTORIOGRAPHY OF 1950'S.

CONFUCIUS HAD SUPPORTED SLAVE AND FEUDAL SOCIETY AND HIS WORKS PROVIDED IDEOLOGICAL MATERIAL WHICH WAS DRAWN ON BY LATER RULERS TO SUPPORT A FEUDAL SYSTEM WHICH LASTED OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS IN CHINA. ON THE OTHER HAND, CH'IN SHIH HUANG WAS A REVOLUTIONARY FIGURE WHO HAD UNIFIED CHINA AND HAD ATTEMPTED OTHER REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES THROUGH EFFORTS TO DESTROY FEUDAL SYSTEM. TS'AO SAID THAT THIS WAS CONSTANT THEME IN CHINESE COMMUNIST THINKING AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A NEW AND STRIKING EVENT. TS'AO SAID THAT APART FROM OCCASIONAL NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON THIS SUBJECT, HE HAD SEEN NO INDICATIONS OF ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY DURING HIS TRAVELS IN CHINA (WHICH INCLUDED SHANGHAI AND CANTON).

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH LIN WAS ANXIOUS TO ENTER THIS DISCUSSION AND OCCASIONALLY PROVIDED FURTHER HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, TS'AO DID MOST OF THE TALKING. HE SEEMED PREPARED FOR THE QUESTION AND GAVE WHAT APPEARS TO BE A STANDARD LINE.
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